

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 11795 271642Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 LAB-04
SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05 /058 W
-----054779 290002Z /12

R 271630Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9721
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

UNCLAS BONN 11795

USEEC, USOECD

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS: EMIN, EIND, GW
SUBJECT: FRG PARLIAMENTARY SPOKESMAN ON STEEL

REF: BONN 21583

1. ECONOMICS STATE SECRETARY GRUENER REPORTED TO THE BUNDESTAG THAT THE EC COMMISSION PROPOSES TO RAISE REFERENCE PRICES FOR STEEL WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BY 5 PERCENT AS OF JULY 1, BUT NOT MANDATORY MINIMUM PRICES. HE ADDED THAT WHILE A FURTHER 5 PERCENT INCREASE IN REFERENCE PRICES MIGHT CONCEIVABLY BE POSSIBLE THIS YEAR, THE FRG WAS FIRMLY OPPOSED TO ANY FURTHER INCREASES BEYOND THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND HAD MADE IT'S POSITION CLEAR AT JUNE 6 MEETING OF THE EC COUNCIL.

2. ON THE QUESTION OF WHAT POLICY SHOULD BE ADOPTED FOR STEEL BY THE EC AT THE END OF THIS YEAR WHEN
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THE PRESENT PROGRAM EXPIRES, GRUENER SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE WIDELY DIVERGENT VIEWS OF MEMBERS, WHICH MIGHT AGAIN THREATEN THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY, HE WAS NOT PRECLUDING A CONTINUATION OF THE PRESENT PROGRAM. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THE INTERESTS OF STEEL PROCESSORS AND FABRICATORS, WHICH HAD BEEN LARGELY IGNORED,

WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THE COMPETITIVENESS OF A NUMBER OF GERMAN FIRMS WHICH DEPEND ON STEEL FOR EXAMPLE HAS DETERIORATED UNDER THE PRESENT EC STEEL MEASURES.

3. IN ORDER TO ALLEVIATE FURTHER COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGES TO PARTICULAR CATEGORIES OF FIRMS, GRUENER SAID THE FRG WOULD SUPPORT SOME SPECIAL RULES GOVERNING HARDSHIP CASES (E.G. FOR SHIPYARDS), BUT THE BASIC FRG POSITION REMAINED THAT THE EC STEEL CRISIS MEASURES SHOULD BE STRICTLY LIMITED IN DURATION. THIS WAS IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO PREVENT PERMANENT DAMAGE TO THE STEEL PROCESSING INDUSTRY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STEEL, STEELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN11795
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780268-0421
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780618/aaaaaouv.tel
Line Count: 77
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 512e667f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BONN 21583
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2199708
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRG PARLIAMENTARY SPOKESMAN ON STEEL
TAGS: EMIN, EIND, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/512e667f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014